

Message Text

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FOR AMBASSADOR VANDENHEUVEL FROM ASSISTANT SEC MAYNES

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UN, AORG, UNDP

SUBJECT: GENEVA GROUP DISCUSSION PAPER: TECHNICAL ASSIS-
TANCE

1. PARAGRAPH TWO TRANSMITS THE SUGGESTED TEXT OF THE
DISCUSSION PAPER FOR THE GENEVA GROUP MEETING, MAY 2-3,
1978.

2. BEGIN TEXT:

THE MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN THE
UNITED NATIONS

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THE UNITED STATES IN THE GENEVA GROUP CONSULTATION LEVEL
MEETING IN OCTOBER 1977 INDICATED THAT IT WOULD PREPARE A
PAPER ON THE FUNDING OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN THE UN.
THE PAPER HAS BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO GROUP MEMBERS AS BACK-
GROUND. THIS PAPER SUMMARIZES THAT EFFORT AND ENCAPSULATES
UNITED STATES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEALING WITH THE ISSUES.

ISSUE:

THE GENEVA GROUP IS INVOLVED WITH THE MANAGEMENT PRAC-
TICES OF THE UN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES. IN RECENT YEARS THE

GROUP HAS BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE LEVELS AND UPWARD

TRENDS IN THE REGULAR, ASSESSED BUDGETS OF THESE ORGANIZATIONS AND HAS ENDEAVORED TO WORK TOGETHER TO LIMIT THE GROWTH OF REGULAR BUDGET RESOURCES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

AS A COROLLARY, GENEVA GROUP MEMBERS REALIZE THAT ALTERNATIVES MAY BE NEEDED IN ORDER TO REDUCE LDC AND SOME SECRETARIAT PRESSURES ON ASSESSED BUDGET FINANCING FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. THE MOST VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO FUTURE ASSESSED BUDGETARY GROWTH APPEARS TO BE LONG TERM DONOR INDICATIONS OF LEVELS OF VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS. OF PARALLEL AND SIMILAR IMPORTANCE IS THE NEED TO IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. THIS MAY REQUIRE SOME MODIFICATION IN UNDP'S WORK AND IN ITS RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER AGENCIES WITHIN THE UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM.

THE DIVERSITY OF THE SYSTEM CREATES SERIOUS PROBLEMS:

-- THE NEED FOR COHERENCE, COORDINATION, AND GOOD MANAGEMENT; AND
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-- THE QUESTION OF THE PROPER RELATIVE ROLE OF ASSESSED AND VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS.

PROBLEM 1: COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT

GIVEN THE DIVERSITY AND DECENTRALIZATION OF THE UN SYSTEM, IT IS DIFFICULT TO ARTICULATE AND IMPLEMENT BASIC POLICY PRIORITIES.

-- THERE IS NO ONE, CENTRAL POINT WHERE BROAD SYSTEM PRIORITIES ARE ESTABLISHED.

-- DATA EITHER DO NOT EXIST OR ARE NOT PROVIDED IN A TIMELY OR COMPARABLE FASHION ON THE TOTAL SET OF OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE SYSTEM.

-- THERE IS A PROBLEM OF FIELD COORDINATION AND A RECURRING TENDENCY FOR EACH AGENCY TO CHALLENGE THE LEADERSHIP OF THE UNDP FIELD REPRESENTATIVE BY ESTABLISHING AN INDEPENDENT FIELD PRESENCE.

-- THE TASK OF EVALUATION AND QUALITY CONTROL IS DIFFICULT BECAUSE THE AGENCIES ARE SO DIVERSE.

-- EACH SPECIALIZED AGENCY HAS ITS OWN CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE AND EACH GOVERNING BODY SEPARATELY MAKES DECISIONS

CONCERNING BUDGET ASSESSMENTS.

-- THE DIFFERENCE IN THE SCHEDULING OF ASSESSED AND VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS COMPLICATES BUDGET MANAGEMENT. IT IS DIFFICULT TO DECIDE UPON APPROPRIATE LEVELS FOR ASSESSED BUDGETS WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF VOLUNTARY RESOURCES TO BECOME AVAILABLE.

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PROBLEM 2: FUNDING

THERE ARE THREE METHODS OF FINANCING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES IN THE UN SYSTEM: A) VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS MADE TO THE UNDP; B) VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS SOME GOVERNMENTS MAKE DIRECTLY TO THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES; AND C) ASSESSED CONTRIBUTIONS PROVIDED TO THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND TO THE UNITED NATIONS ITSELF ACCORDING TO VARIOUS FORMULAS. VOLUNTARY AND ASSESSED CONTRIBUTIONS HAVE NOTABLE CHARACTERISTICS:

-- THE ASSESSED CONTRIBUTION METHOD OFFERS IMPORTANT ADVANTAGES FOR FUNDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, SUCH AS AUTOMATIC BURDEN-SHARING OR COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN FUNDING PROGRAMS WHOSE BENEFITS ARE REGIONAL OR GLOBAL, E.G., COMBATTING COMMUNICABLE DISEASE. IT ALSO POSES PROBLEMS FOR MAJOR DONORS, FOR WHILE EXERCISING CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE, THEY DO NOT ENJOY A HIGH DEGREE OF CONTROL.

-- VOLUNTARY FUNDING OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, ON THE OTHER HAND, BE IT THROUGH UNDP OR DIRECTLY TO THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES, OFFERS DISTINCT ADVANTAGES OVER ASSESSED CONTRIBUTIONS. IT GIVES DONORS MORE CONTROL OVER THE MAGNITUDE, DIRECTION, CONTENT AND PERFORMANCE OF THE ACTIVITY.

-- THE IMPACT OF GREATER RESOURCES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FUNDED IN REGULAR BUDGETS COULD DISTORT THE ORIGINAL BASIC POLICY FUNCTIONS OF THE ORGANIZATIONS AND LEAD THEM, WITHOUT ANY CLEAR POLICY DECISION TO THIS EFFECT, AWAY FROM THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THEY WERE ESTABLISHED.

THE UNITED STATES ADVOCATES STRONGLY THAT TECHNICAL
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ASSISTANCE SHOULD BE FUNDED PRIMARILY FROM VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS. VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS USUALLY SHOULD BE CHanneled THROUGH THE UNDP TO STRENGTHEN ITS CRITICAL ROLE IN UN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES. IN SOME CASES, VOLUNTARY FUNDS MAY BE GIVEN DIRECTLY TO SPECIALIZED

AGENCIES IF THIS WOULD BE VERY MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE AND SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE THE COSTS OF CHANNELING MONEY THROUGH THE UNDP.

THE UNITED STATES ALSO BELIEVES THAT THERE ARE SOME AREAS OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WHERE THE COLLECTIVE BENEFITS ARE SUFFICIENTLY LARGE THAT IT MAKES SENSE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO FUND THESE THROUGH "BURDEN-SHARING" FEATURES OF THE ASSESSED BUDGETS. MOREOVER, GIVEN THE CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATES OF MANY AGENCIES AND THE HISTORICAL ROLE MANY MEMBERS PLAYED IN SHAPING THE SYSTEM, IT IS NOT FEASIBLE TO COMPLETELY ELIMINATE ASSESSED FUNDING OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WITHOUT A FUNDAMENTAL REVISION OF THE TREATY STRUCTURE OF THE UN SYSTEM, WHICH IS IMPRACTICABLE.

WE BELIEVE THAT GENEVA GROUP MEMBERS CAN HELP ATTAIN THE OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF (A) LIMITING THE USE OF ASSESSMENTS TO FINANCE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS TO ESSENTIAL AREAS; (B) PREVENTING THE CREATION OF NEW TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FUNDED WITH ASSESSED BUDGETS; AND (C) CONTROLLING THE SIZE OF ANY FUNDS CREATED. THE FIRST REQUIRES DEFINING WITHIN CLOSE PARAMETERS THE LIMITED FORMS OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WHICH SHOULD BE FUNDED THROUGH ASSESSMENTS, RECALLING BOTH THE LEGAL MANDATES OF THE ORGANIZATIONS AND A FEW AREAS IN WHICH THIS FORM OF FUNDING IS IN THE COLLECTIVE INTEREST. SECONDLY, WE CAN SIMULTANEOUSLY MEET OUR REQUIREMENT TO FUND THE GREAT MAJORITY OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE VOLUNTARILY AND STILL MEET DEVELOPING COUNTRY HOPES FOR REASONABLE LEVELS OF SUSTAINED PROGRAM GROWTH IF WE

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PROMOTE GREATER USE OF LONG TERM FUNDING FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS:

1. COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT

IMPROVED COORDINATION OF UN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUIRES NATIONS TO BUILD UPON THE STRENGTHS OF UNDP AND TO RECOGNIZE AND ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE WEAKNESSES WHERE THEY MAY EXIST. IT ALSO REQUIRES STRONG ACTION TOWARD RELATED ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE UNDP FRAMEWORK. IN LIGHT OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS, THE UNITED STATES PROPOSES THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS:

-- TO CONTINUE TO SUSTAIN THE UNDP AS THE MAJOR CHANNEL FOR VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OF THE UN SYSTEM;

-- TO SUPPORT A STRENGTHENED ROLE FOR THE UNDP RESIDENT

REPRESENTATIVES, INTER ALIA BY MAKING THEM THE FOCAL POINT
IN THE RECIPIENT COUNTRY FOR LIAISON AMONG ALL AGENCIES
ENGAGED IN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES AND TO
ENCOURAGE UNDP'S DECENTRALIZATION OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT;

-- TO ENCOURAGE THE UNDP, WORKING WITH OTHER RELEVANT
UN BODIES, TO ESTABLISH APPROPRIATE DEFINITIONS AND
PROCEDURES FOR THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER UN
AGENCIES FOR ASSEMBLING TIMELY, COMPREHENSIVE AND COMPAR-
ABLE DATA ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES. IN THIS,
THE PRICE WATERHOUSE STUDY SHOULD BE HELPFUL;

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-- TO SUPPORT AN ENHANCED ROLE FOR THE UNDP IN SETTING
TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR PROJECT APPRAISAL, EXECUTION,
MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND TO WORK TO OBTAIN GENERAL
ACCEPTANCE OF THESE STANDARDS AMONG UN AGENCIES; AND

-- TO SUPPORT AN EXPANSION OF EVALUATION EFFORTS
GENERALLY WITHIN THE UN SYSTEM.

2. FUNDING

THE UNITED SUGGESTS THAT THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WILL
HELP TO REACH THE OBJECTIVE OF LIMITING THE USE OF
ASSESSED FUNDS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS:

-- WITHIN INTERGOVERNMENTAL BODIES AND THE
SECRETARIATS OF UN ORGANIZATIONS WORK TO RESIST EXPANSION
OF EXISTING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS THROUGH ASSESSED
BUDGETS OR THE PROLIFERATION OF SUCH NEW PROGRAMS;

-- ATTEMPT TO LIMIT DEPARTURES FROM THE PRINCIPLE OF
VOLUNTARY FUNDING OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EXCEPT IN A FEW
WELL-DEFINED INSTANCES WHERE IT IS IN THE COMMON INTEREST;

-- BEGIN TO EXPLORE ACTIVELY WITH OTHER DONOR COUNTRIES
THE PLACING OF UNDP VOLUNTARY FUNDING ON A SOUND BASIS
THROUGH LONG TERM INDICATIONS OF SUPPORT BY FUND DONORS.
END TEXT.

3. NOTE: IF MISSION DESIRES CHANGES IN THE ABOVE TEXT
PLEASE DO SO IN TELEGRAPHIC REPLY. CHRISTOPHER

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